



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

May 23, 2007

The Honorable André Bauer
President of the Senate
State House, 1st Floor, East Wing
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

With regret, I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval S. 277, R-53.

This bill would allow the South Carolina Department of Transportation to mow beyond the statutory 30-foot limit along 20 miles of interstate rights-of way in Laurens County. In the past, I have supported legislation that allows limited exemption to the underlying law, provided they were not overly broad.

South Carolina has been blessed with a unique and natural beauty that has always attracted people to our state. I believe this is part of the reason Senator Arthur Ravenel worked so hard to get the 30 foot rule enacted into law. It was the belief of the General Assembly at the time of passage that our state's natural beauty could be showcased if you allowed vegetation, and ultimately trees, to grow up in this thirty foot divide so that you had a parkway feel along our interstates. The Assembly's view was that rather than having four oncoming lanes of traffic similar to the interstate feel and appearance found in many other states, that highlighting our beauty would be part of the formula to draw thousands of visitors, businesses, and new residents each year. I concur with this view, and believe, whenever possible, we should seek to preserve the enormous value of our natural settings.

The intent of this legislation was to allow for clearance in two limited cases along interstates in Laurens County. In the course of amending the bill, the legislation has now exempted more than one-third of Laurens County interstate mileage from the 30 foot rule. If the legislation had been narrowly drafted for those two locations, I would have had signed the legislation. However, given my record of opposing much broader exemptions, I am left with little choice but to veto this bill.

I would encourage the sponsors to send me more narrowly-tailored legislation so that we can preserve more of the Upstate's natural beauty - and still provide the intended affect for the two industrial settings the County would like to showcase.

For these reasons, I must regrettably veto S. 227, R-53, and return it without my approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Mark Sanford in dark ink.

Mark Sanford